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IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff,

v.

GEOFFREY GUESS,

Defendants.

CASE NO. 1:20-CR-00241-ADA-BAM

STIPULATION REGARDING EXCLUDABLE
TIME PERIODS UNDER SPEEDY TRIAL ACT;
FINDINGS AND ORDER

DATE: March 22, 2023
TIME: 8:30 a.m.
COURT: Hon. Ana de Alba

This case is set for status conference on March 22, 2023, which the parties stipulate to vacate in order to set a change of plea hearing on November 28, 2022 for the reasons set forth below. On May 13, 2020, this Court issued General Order 618, which suspends all jury trials in the Eastern District of California “until further notice.” Further, pursuant to General Order 611, this Court’s declaration of judicial emergency under 18 U.S.C. § 3174, and the Ninth Circuit Judicial Council’s Order of April 16, 2020 continuing this Court’s judicial emergency, this Court has allowed district judges to continue all criminal matters to a date after May 2, 2021.¹ This and previous General Orders, as well as the declarations of judicial emergency, were entered to address public health concerns related to COVID-19.

Although the General Orders and declarations of emergency address the district-wide health concern, the Supreme Court has emphasized that the Speedy Trial Act’s end-of-justice provision

¹ A judge “may order case-by-case exceptions” at the discretion of that judge “or upon the request of counsel, after consultation with counsel and the Clerk of the Court to the extent such an order will impact court staff and operations.” General Order 618, ¶ 7 (E.D. Cal. May 13, 2020).

“counteract[s] substantive openendedness with procedural strictness,” “demand[ing] on-the-record findings” in a particular case. *Zedner v. United States*, 547 U.S. 489, 509 (2006). “[W]ithout on-the-record findings, there can be no exclusion under” § 3161(h)(7)(A). *Id.* at 507. Moreover, any such failure cannot be harmless. *Id.* at 509; *see also United States v. Ramirez-Cortez*, 213 F.3d 1149, 1153 (9th Cir. 2000) (explaining that a judge ordering an ends-of-justice continuance must set forth explicit findings on the record “either orally or in writing”).

Based on the plain text of the Speedy Trial Act—which *Zedner* emphasizes as both mandatory and inexcusable—General Orders 611, 612, 617, and 618 and the subsequent declaration of judicial emergency require specific supplementation. Ends-of-justice continuances are excludable only if “the judge granted such continuance on the basis of his findings that the ends of justice served by taking such action outweigh the best interest of the public and the defendant in a speedy trial.” 18 U.S.C. § 3161(h)(7)(A). Moreover, no such period is excludable unless “the court sets forth, in the record of the case, either orally or in writing, its reason or finding that the ends of justice served by the granting of such continuance outweigh the best interests of the public and the defendant in a speedy trial.” *Id.*

The General Orders and declaration of judicial emergency exclude delay in the “ends of justice.” 18 U.S.C. § 3161(h)(7) (Local Code T4). Although the Speedy Trial Act does not directly address continuances stemming from pandemics, natural disasters, or other emergencies, this Court has discretion to order a continuance in such circumstances. For example, the Ninth Circuit affirmed a two-week ends-of-justice continuance following Mt. St. Helens’ eruption. *Furlow v. United States*, 644 F.2d 764 (9th Cir. 1981). The court recognized that the eruption made it impossible for the trial to proceed. *Id.* at 767-68; *see also United States v. Correa*, 182 F. Supp. 326, 329 (S.D.N.Y. 2001) (citing *Furlow* to exclude time following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and the resultant public emergency). The coronavirus is posing a similar, albeit more enduring, barrier to the prompt proceedings mandated by the statutory rules.

In light of the societal context created by the foregoing, this Court should consider the following case-specific facts in finding excludable delay appropriate in this particular case under the ends-of-justice exception, § 3161(h)(7) (Local Code T4).² If continued, this Court should designate a new date

² The parties note that General Order 612 acknowledges that a district judge may make “additional findings to support the exclusion” at the judge’s discretion. General Order 612, ¶ 5 (E.D.

for the change of plea. *United States v. Lewis*, 611 F.3d 1172, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010) (noting any pretrial continuance must be “specifically limited in time”).

STIPULATION

Plaintiff United States of America, by and through its counsel of record, and defendant, by and through defendant’s counsel of record, hereby stipulate as follows:

1. By previous order, this matter was set for status on March 22, 2023.

2. By this stipulation, the parties now move to vacate the status conference date for a change of plea on November 28, 2022.

3. The parties agree and stipulate, and request that the Court find the following:

a) On November 10, 2022, the parties entered into and filed a Memorandum of Plea Agreement. Dkt. 296. For that reason, the parties agree that a change of plea on November 28, 2022 is appropriate. Prior to filing this stipulation, the parties conferred with the courtroom deputy for the assigned district court judge, who indicated this date is available for a change of plea.

b) Time was previously excluded until March 22, 2023.

4. Nothing in this stipulation and order shall preclude a finding that other provisions of the Speedy Trial Act dictate that additional time periods are excludable from the period within which a trial must commence.

IT IS SO STIPULATED.

Dated: November 10, 2022

PHILLIP A. TALBERT
United States Attorney

/s/ STEPHANIE M. STOKMAN
STEPHANIE M. STOKMAN
Assistant United States Attorney

Dated: November 10, 2022

/s/ MICHAEL AED

MICHAEL AED
Counsel for Defendant
Geoffrey Guess

Cal. March 18, 2020).

ORDER

IT IS SO ORDERED that the status conference set for March 22, 2023, is vacated. A change of plea hearing is set for **November 28, 2022, at 8:30 a.m. before District Judge Ana de Alba**. Time was previously excluded through March 22, 2023.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

Dated: **November 14, 2022**

/s/ *Barbara A. McAuliffe*
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE